

In English, there are several phrases which sound or look similar, but have different meanings. It is important not to get these confused.

**See also:**

Present simple **1** Present continuous **4**  
"Used to" and "would" **15**

### 116.1 "GET USED TO" AND "BE USED TO"

To **"get used to (doing) something"** describes the process of adapting to new or different situations until they become familiar or normal.

**Waking up early for my new job was difficult at first, but eventually I **got used to** it.**



To **"be used to (doing) something"** means that something has been done for long enough that it is normal and familiar.

**I've lived in the city for years, so I **am used to** the bad pollution.**



#### TIP

These phrases should not be confused with "used to" (without "be" or "get"), which is used when talking about a regular past action.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES



**When I travel, I **get used to** different customs very quickly.**

[I find it easy to adapt to different customs when I travel.]



**I **got used to** the cold weather within a couple of weeks.**

[I adapted to the cold weather within two weeks.]



**I **am used to** spicy food as I've always eaten it.**

[I am accustomed to eating spicy food.]



**We **were used to** the old teacher, so it was a shame when she left.**

[We were accustomed to our previous teacher, but then she left.]

## 116.2 "HAVE / GET SOMETHING DONE"

"Have" and "get" can be used with a noun and the past participle to talk about something someone does for someone else. "Get" is less formal than "have."

Did you **get** your computer updated?

[Did somebody update your computer for you?]



Yes, the company **has** the computers updated regularly.

[Yes, somebody regularly updates them for the company.]

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

The structure is used with "should" to give advice.

You **should get** your connection checked.

[I think you should arrange for someone to check your connection.]

They haven't **had** the locks changed yet.

[They haven't arranged for somebody to change the locks for them.]

Will you **get** the oven fixed soon?

[Will somebody fix the oven for you soon?]

The store **has** its produce checked daily.

[Somebody checks the store's produce each day.]

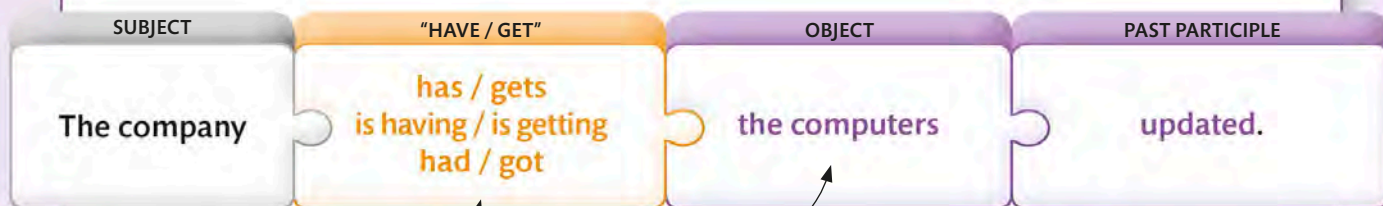
I **need to get** my hair cut.

[I need someone to cut my hair.]

Most people **have** burglar alarms installed.

[Most people have someone fit them a burglar alarm.]

### HOW TO FORM



"Have" and "get" can appear in different tenses.

The action happens to the object.

# 117 Sequencing and organizing

There are a number of words and phrases in English which help to explain the order of events. They can also be used to organize text and make it easier to understand.

See also:

More linking words 112

Making conversation 120

## 117.1 SEQUENCING PHRASES

Certain words and phrases indicate at what point in a sequence something happens.



**First**, he woke up.



**Then** he ate breakfast.



**Next**, he had a shower.



**After that**, he got dressed.



**Finally**, he went to work.

## FURTHER EXAMPLES



**In the morning**, we watched the sun rise over the Serengeti.



**Meanwhile**, we got ready to go on safari.



**Finally**, we saw some lions.



**First**, I got some money out of the bank.



**Second**, I bought some food from the supermarket.



**After that**, I had some coffee.



**First of all**, the chef mixed together butter and sugar.



**After that**, she added eggs and flour.



**Finally**, she put the mix in the oven.



## 117.2 FORMAL ORGANIZING PHRASES

Some discourse markers show what is coming next. They help organize paragraphs and longer passages of formal text.

### TIP

These organizing words often go at the beginning of a clause or sentence.

Sequencing markers can help to put information in order.



**First of all,**  
**To begin with,** } it is important to consider which courses you want to study.

Some markers introduce new or additional points.



**Additionally,**  
**Furthermore,**  
**Moreover,** } you should keep in mind where you want to study.

Other markers highlight examples.



**For example,**  
**For instance,** } you should consider whether you want to study abroad.



"Such as" can only be used in the middle of a sentence to introduce examples.

You can also look at other activities, a { **such as**  
**for example**  
**for instance** } club or society.

Conclusion markers are used when summing up.



**In conclusion,**  
**Overall,** } several factors will affect your choice of college.

# 118 Correcting and changing the subject

Set words and phrases can be used to correct someone, disagree, change the subject, or concede a point. They often come at the beginning of the sentence.

**See also:**

More linking words **112** Deciding and hedging **119** Making conversation **120**

## 118.1 CORRECTING AND DISAGREEING

Certain words can be used to show you disagree with someone or to correct a misunderstanding.

### TIP

These phrases can appear impolite if spoken with heavy emphasis.



I don't think this painting is worth that much.

Wow! Do you like it?

**Actually**, it sold at auction for \$2 million.

I don't, **actually**. It's not very impressive.



## FURTHER EXAMPLES

That play was really good, wasn't it?

**Well**, I found the plot quite hard to follow, **to be honest**.

**But** the actors were excellent!

I'm afraid I don't think so. I thought they were terrible.



Did you enjoy the book I gave you?

**Actually**, I found it quite boring.

**Really?** It's so well written!

I don't agree. I prefer thrillers.



## 118.2 CHANGING SUBJECT

"By the way" shows a change of subject.



I think this gallery is fantastic.  
Oh, **by the way**, did you read the article about this exhibit in *The Times*?

"As I was saying" returns to a previous subject after a change of subject or an interruption.



**As I was saying**, this is a fantastic exhibit. I really like the range of artwork.

"Anyway" returns to a subject after an interruption or a change in subject. It can also end a subject or a conversation.



**Anyway**, I should say goodbye. I want to visit the gallery shop before it closes.

## 118.3 CONCEDED A POINT

Certain words can be used to agree to, or concede, a point, particularly after first doubting it to be true.

**I told you** this museum is very expensive.



**You're right!** I expected it to be cheaper.

## FURTHER EXAMPLES

I think this sculpture is made of stone.



**You have a good point.** At first I thought it was metal.

This painting could be by Picasso.



**I see your point.** The style is similar.



# 119 Deciding and hedging

English uses a number of words and phrases to discuss the different sides of an argument or to make sentences sound less definite.

**See also:**

Infinitives and participles **51** More linking words **112** Making conversation **120**

## 119.1 DISCUSSING ARGUMENTS

There are specific words and phrases which are used to discuss or compare the good and bad sides of an argument.



I'm not sure whether to go to the party tonight.

On the one hand, I'd have a great time.  
On the other hand, I have work to do.

## FURTHER EXAMPLES

**Although** my friends will be at the party, I don't want to stay up late.



I could go to the party. **Alternatively** I could stay in and study.



**Of course**, there is going to be good music and lots of food.



I don't want to study Art. **However**, my teacher thinks I'm good at it.



**Despite** my reservations, I think I'll go to the party anyway.



## 119.2 HEDGING

Hedging words and phrases can be added to a sentence to make its meaning less definite, direct, or strong.



Polls **{ suggest  
indicate }** that locals dislike the new statue.

Hedging verbs.

It is **{ arguably  
potentially }** the strangest statue around.

Hedging adverbs.

**{ To a certain degree,  
To some extent, }** locals feel their views are being ignored.

Hedging phrases.

## 119.3 "SEEM" AND "APPEAR"

"Seem" and "appear" are words used to distance oneself from a statement. This is useful when it is not certain if the statement is true.



The prisoners **{ seem  
appear }** to have vanished.

"Seem" and "appear" are often followed by another verb in the infinitive.

It **{ seems  
appears }** that the prison cell was left unguarded.

"It seems" or "It appears" can be followed by a "that" clause.

It would **{ seem  
appear }** that a file was used to break the bars.

"Would" adds even more distance or uncertainty.



# 120 Making conversation

Many words and phrases are used in English to ease the flow of conversation. These techniques are often called organizing, backchanneling, or stalling.

See also:  
More linking words 112  
Hedging 119

## 120.1 INFORMAL ORGANIZING WORDS

A number of general words can be used to move from one topic to another in conversational English.



## 120.2 BACKCHANNELING

When listening to another speaker, it's common to use words to show you agree and are paying attention. This is known as backchanneling.



## 120.3 STALLING TECHNIQUES

If extra time is needed to think about a difficult question before answering it, a response can be started with a stalling phrase to indicate that the question is being considered.

Would you be happy to work weekends?

**Well**, I do have two children.



What are your strengths?

**Good question.** I have excellent computer skills.



Why should we hire you?

**Let's see...** I think my experience would be very useful.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

**So**, I'm thinking of quitting my job.

**You know**, that might be a bad idea.



**I mean**, the change would be good.

**Sort of**, but you've always wanted to work where you are now.



**Now**, I didn't think of it that way.

**I kind of** think in the long run you'd be much happier staying where you are.

